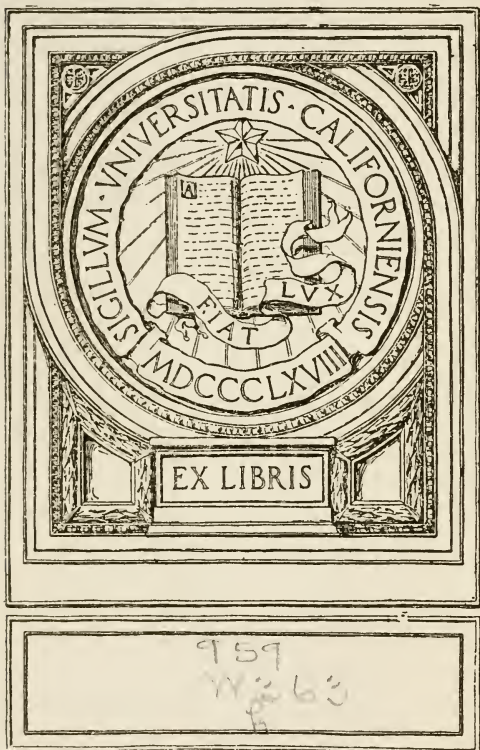


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HEARD MELODIES




BY THE SAME AUTHOR 

THE STAR FIELDS AND OTHER
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THE BUBBLE AND OTHER POEMS
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Heard Melodies

Written by Willoughby Weaving  *Author of The Star Fields, and
The Bubble,*  *and published by B. H.
Blackwell, over against the Sheldonian
Theatre, Oxford*  *mdcccxcviii*

TO
MY FRIENDS
AMONG THE HEROIC DEAD

English Album

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I CANNOT let these poems go to press without acknowledging my gratitude to my friend, Mr. Richard Rowley, for his many beautiful amendments which, without exception, I think, I have used.

W. W.

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THE CURLEWS

A LOFT, unseen in the shadows,
The curlews cry,
Between the starry waters
And the starry sky,
And my heart leans out and longing calls to the deep,
“The spirits of those I love
Come flocking in from above!”
But afar those cries speed fading, and she turns
to weep.

But ever, when night is falling,
My heart will lean
Betwixt the wavering waters
And the sky serene;
And ever she calls and calls in a sad despair,
Lest haply they should come
To find her blind and dumb
And pass her in her weariness, and be unaware.

BEAUTY ABROAD

BEAUTY hath left her swept and garnished
shrine,

And she, who delicately went, is found
No longer on her cloistral paths divine,
But on less fair though no less holy ground.

—Ground marred and mounded, pitted, stripped
and rent,

Foul with the horrid feculence of war,
And mired with rottings of the firmament,
Foul and yet sacred as God's Gardens are.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

OF all the world most sacred unto him
Were you green fields of Meath; for you
he laid

The pen aside and all those visions dim
Just brightening through the iris-fringed shade.
For you and all your blackbirds piping sweet
He left your peace that he had loved so long,
And, like a hermit, in his heart's retreat

Sweetened your memories through the stops of song.
For in the burning East and broken France
He found you still and walked, a man apart,
Despite the fire and thunder of advance,
Still in those quiet meadows of his heart.
For you not only did he fight and die,
But also gained an immortality.

FROM "LIFE "

SO much Time hath shredded and shorn from me,
So much hath Death pitiless torn from me,
That by what I have left
I more am bereft.

More merciless they are in their leaving me
Enough of life only for grieving me.
They have stripped my soul bare
Of all but his care.

DIRGE

OH, how shall I tell thee
Of the beautiful wild ways
Of the woods and the young shining shy leaves
Fresh-spread on the sprays,

DIRGE

And the birdsong—the undiffident dear music
That filleth the days ?

Ah ! the joy of the telling
Thee tenderly as of old
Was half the joy greater than the whole joy
Of the things that were told !
How can I warm to blossom and blithe music
When thou art so cold ?

Oh, how can I tell thee
Things delicate and dear ?
What delight have the bright blooms and bird-loves ?
What spring the sad year ?
Oh, what agony o’ermastereth the seasons
Since thou cannot hear !

BEYOND RECALL

ONE who had walked awhile with Death,
And knew what he accomplisheth,
Having, amid the stress and strife,
Found death as common as the day
And, close as night, had put away
The fallacy of life.

Where men fell thick, like sheaves beside
The shrewd machine that reaped and tied,
And life was left like stubble bare,
He could but see with inner sight
That life was but a thing how slight,
And death a thing how fair.

How empty seemed those husks of men
That ne'er would lift their hands again
Nor fill with thought those faces grim ;
But Death was present with them, more
Than life had been, and closer bore
Them now in love to him.

He did not wish that they would rise
And move their silly hands and eyes :
He almost feared their bodies yet,
Lest they should claim their inmates fair,
And draw them struggling from the air,
And force them to forget.

The beauty of their bodies now,
That once he loved, he knew not how
Till Death had left it overthrown ;
He envied lest it might entice
Their souls again from Paradise,
And snatch them from his own.

He watched while men with tender skill
Sought signs of life within them still,
Despairing at their hope ; and when
They ceased and bound the hands and feet,
A joy and great compassion sweet
Filled up his soul again.

FROM " LIFE "

AS touching the dear dead, within my heart,
Their cenotaph yet holding of them more
Than earth has gathered and the skies impart,
Beauty dwells telling their sweet memories o'er
In quiet holiness ; till I who said
Despairing a last sentence to the dead
That seemed, ah ! so unheeding as they lay
Ere they were hid for ever and borne away,
Grow sure that I shall greet them all once more.

How this shall be I know not. Though so long
I made such vain enquiry of the way,
And strong despair for ever grew more strong,
Waxing against my struggling fain dismay,

I seek the way no longer, care not how
This thing shall be, since I do surely know,
Despite the old unbroken battailous thought
'Gainst which so long prevailing not I fought,
That Time shall bring at last the looked for day.

This is not hope if hope's a thing unsure,
Nor knowledge if that be a thing of rote,
Nor dream except a dream be more secure
Than all things proved beyond the chance of doubt,
Nor faith nor love unless these twain outspeed
The selfish fear of my own end indeed,
Nor sense of worthiness—I pray that this
May not impede too long God's gift of bliss!—
It is the truth above all searching out.

DEDICATION

O BEAUTY, take my song,
Though it be borne along
Like chirp of grasshoppers
To your fine hearing,
And not like rounded notes
Piped from the sweet birds' throats—
Wild birds that fill your heart
With songs unfearing.

DEDICATION

Though less than music seems
The utterance of my dreams,
Still as I love to hear
That small unheeded
Dry chirp amid the grass
Exulting as I pass,
So mayest thou pause to hear
My notes unneeded.

RETURN

WITHIN an Abyssinian dale
Sang a wintering nightingale
Of over-seas and lands that lie
Like clouds upon an evening sky,
Of hedgerows white and sweet with may
Under the woodlands far away.

Under the woodlands far away,
Of branches laden low with may,
The clouds upon a summer sky
And cool green lands that leafy lie ;
Dreaming of these in moonlight pale
Within an Abyssinian vale
Sang a wintering nightingale.

THE STAR

9

THE STAR

BEAUTY had first my pride ;
But now my heart she hath,
And all the whole world wide
Is Beauty's path !
By mountain, field and flood
I walked in hardihood ;
But now with delicate pace
Her steps I trace.

Once did my spirit dare
In fond presumptuous dream
To make her ways more fair
That fair did seem.
But all the world became
Her ways elect, to shame
With their least lovely lot
My loftiest thought.

Her worshipful bright fire !
Ah ! Whither will it lead
My burning faint desire
And feet that bleed ?
Far in my failing view,
A pure and blazing gem,
She lights on earth the New
Jerusalem !

MARSYAS AND APOLLO

I N the shady hollow
By the oleanders
I first met
The lovely shepherd,
A boy delicate
And fair as a girl,
But lithe as a panther.
As graciously he moved
His white limbs rippled
With strength unfroward,
Beautiful and fawnlike
Was his lovely langour
And couthly filled
With the wistful terror
Of wild things, with something also
Of the tiger's stealth,
When careless she goes
And most deceiving.

Terrible seemed his beauty,
Till I, beholding
More closely his face
Divine, observed power,
And strength merciful,

And inviolable love,
Pitiful, indignant,
And godlike courage,
Music and wisdom,
And youth eternal,
And no petulant,
Sensuous boy's beauty,
No cunning cruelty of the faun.

Marvelling, I feared
To approach, though often
He came. But stealthily
I hid in the thickets,
Ever watching and filled with worship.
He wore a pard skin
Carelessly looped
And broached from his white shoulder,
And slung behind him
An ancient lyre.
Thrust in his girdle
Was his pipe. A shepherd's
Staff he bore.

To the same spot ever
He came, by the stream
Where I lurked ; and, disrobing,
Bathed his white body

MARSYAS AND APOLLO

In the limpid waters,
And thereafter lay
Stretched in the warm sun,
Basking. But to-day,
Like the Brook's self arisen
From his native waters,
Taking his lyre
He made immortal music,
Such melody as had filled
My heart with wonder
Beyond enduring,
Had he not sung thereto
More marvellous song.

Thereafter ere I had gathered
My bewildered senses,
And awfully had pondered,
He on a sudden
Gently laughed
And cried without turning,
" Good shepherd, come hither !
I long have waited.
Come, shy one, from the oleanders."

So sweet and inviting,
So compelling his voice
That I forgot to marvel

How knew he my hiding-place.
Nor marked I his mockery
Divine and gentle ;
But like a wild thing
Fascinated
I crept forth
With terrible joy.

“ Shepherd,” he said,
“ Thou hast heard my playing.
If thou wouldest, arise
And strive against me
Therein. But if skilled
Thou wert or matchless in the lyre,
Much I doubt
If gladly thou wouldst engage
For costly wager.
Likewise thou hast heard my song.
But, being shepherd,
Thou art practised in piping ;
And well I wot
Thy delicate renown.
Come now and wager
A full-fleeced sheep
From your pasture, and I against it
Will set from mine

MARSYAS AND APOLLO

A ram golden-fleeced.”
Therewith from the thickets
Came the ram,
A marvellous creature
With fleece tinkling
Of sunny gold.
And, while I wondered,
Continuing he spoke,
“ But since I am unpractised
And thou art skilful,
Awhile let us change our pipes
To make advantage
Less partial.”

Therewith from my girdle
He plucked my ivory reed
And, laughing, gave me
This antique ebon flute,
Bidding me make music.
Then, fearful, I delicately
Obeyed,
Trembling.

Beautiful
Beyond words and my utmost skill
Was the music that answered
My timorous breathing

From that sweet pipe divine !
Courage and ecstasy
I gained ; and all around me,
As wildly I played,
Were shapes glorious,
And splendours half divulged,
Motions elemental,
Magnificent grace,
And no sorrowful,
Transient earth-beauty,
No piteous passion of the world !

Fainting, I ceased,
Heart-broken with the splendour
And power of my playing.
But lightly he touched my shoulder,
And, marvellously refreshed,
I arose.

“ Verily,” he said, “ thy fame
Is short of thy playing,
And aspiring praise
Unequal to thy skill.
And how shall I,
Unpractised, dare compete ? ”

With lovely laughter
He pressed then my pipe

MARSYAS AND APOLLO

To his beautiful lips,
—My thrice blessed reed !
Ah ! how shall I tell
What melodious
Unwonted music
He breathed there-through ?
How I fell in the grasses,
Shuddering, before him,
And, clutching at his knees, wildly
I prayed him to cease,
Crying, “ Take thou, O Divine One,
The full-fleeced sheep ! ”

Smiling, he ceased,
And said, “ O shepherd,
Herein art thou vanquished ?
But behold thy strength !
Thou art swarthy and thick,
Fine of loin
And broad of shoulder,
Browned by the air
And knotted by thy labour,
Erect and strong.
But I am delicate of frame,
As thou seest,
And to toil uninured.

Wherefore arise
And, featly wrestling,
Win back thy full-fleeced sheep.
Also thou shalt ask
What further guerdon
Thou desirest,
If so thou entertainest
My challenge with success."

Furiously we strove
And long 'mid the oleanders,
And much I marvelled
At the fine strength hidden
In his delicate frame.
But at last, o'ermastered,
Beneath my body
Panting he lay,
His lovely head bent wearily back.
Then cried he heavily,
" Shepherd, what wilt thou? "
" Thy name, O Divine One ! "
But he answered,
" Not this will I grant thee ;
But for thy simple asking,
Thy love and thy worship
Will I give thee much more."

Therewith on a sudden
With laughter he threw me,
As I were but a child.
Fainting I fell,
And, awakening,
Found in my hand
This antique ebon flute.

GENESIS

A TEMPORAL thing to serve a moment's whim
God first made man. But he in God's
despite

Refused to perish in his own delight
That with temptation sweet surrounded him.
Bright was his heart, although his hope was dim,
And greater from his sorrows than fear could blight.

He vanquished Time, and stormed the Infinite,
And made Death splendid as the Seraphim.

For holding life at little price, even less
Than God's own estimation, and his love
And honour higher than the heavens above,
He sought his satisfaction. He did not guess
How his brief mortal days had come to be
Ancestral even to Eternity.

THE WEB

PRIVILY from sill to tree,
Time cast his line and featly wove
His wheels of web, and captured me.

Then I for freedom fiercely strove,
And striving still with baffled wings
Make rents within his cloying strings.

Not yet the spider dares advance,
Although I snap the spokes and rims,
Lest I be armed with pointed lance ;
But in the offing round he swims
With furtive eyes to make assay
With strong advantage on his prey.

Or sits and waits till I must pause :
Then darts within my guard amain,
And, ere I mark his will, withdraws
And has me shrewdly looped again.
Repairing in a moment swift
All that my struggles broke adrift.

Then cunningly beyond my reach,
Shrewd engineer, with novel span,

Bridges once more the widening breech,
 Suiting to greater strain his plan,
With line and lever straight and taut,
Reducing all my strength to naught.

Long have I struggled, oft have torn
 His clews and thought that I was free,
Or hoped that he in fear had shorn
 His ropes glad to be rid of me
Who made such havoc of his snare
And was too armed for him to dare.

But he in fear to lose me still
 Has boldly crossed the single thread,
And closing with consummate skill,
 Left me at least discomfited,
Or, if my barb has pierced him through,
Has trebled the lone thread anew.

He cares not if the webs endure :
 No future victims have his thought :
Wholly his heart is to secure
 A prey most formidably caught.
He loves to match his skill sedate
Against a foe so desperate.

THE WEB

21

And if his patient methods fail,
 Sooner than see his victim fled,
Before the battering wings avail
 To break the last entangling thread,
He closes with his foeman, fain
To slay, though slaying he be slain.

Forgetful of the lust to live,
 Forgetful of his promised food,
He cares not beaten to survive
 And batten on less costly blood ;
The end for which he ventures life
Not triumph, but heroic strife.

ANIMULA

AH, soul of mine ! whatever thou art that so
 trepidant criest
Against dissolution, whether thou art but a selfish
 fear,
Or, a fond hope sprung from desires ancestral, at
 last thou liest
Somewhat assured of thy eternal kinship, but still
 unclear.

Lineal from the Beast, forefathered by fear, hope,
 worship, the vainest
And duly the most transient thing in thy craven
 desire
Thou seem'st ; but when once self-forgetting in love
 no more thou complainest,
The eternal I know for thy inheritance and God for
 thy sire.

JUNE

FROM THE TRENCHES

BLOOM-DRENCHED laburnums,
 And in the air
The scent of hidden lilac
 Steeping :—rare
And rich is the June in England.
 Would I were there !

Deep lanes are littered,
 Between tall grass,
With tinted May-confetti :
 Gaily pass
The bridals of Spring and Summer
 In England. Alas !

ADVENTURE

FROM " LIFE "

A MONG the stars my dreams I set
To be a second milky way,
Leading to worlds untravellèd yet,
Less heavily enrobed with clay.

But when upon that way I went
Expectant, where worlds wheeled about,
It led but round the firmament
Back to the spot whence I set out.

I rose to tear them from the sky,
The dreams that had so soon misled ;
But with a sudden joyful cry
Found this world new-discoverèd !

YOUTH

H E flieth afar,
And none can measure his height,
Above manhood's forests
And age's towery bright
Bare crests. The eagle that soareth
Ne'er dreamed of his flight,

YOUTH

The mists of the morning
Impede not. Shadows of night
Never close around him.

He hath the sun ever in sight.
The stars are his friends, and the planets
His brothers in light.

INVOCATION

THE dream-drift fancies fly
No longer to my heart.
I am a thing put by—
A shadow set apart,
A skeleton that I dare not see,
Which still's the most of me.

Come, song, and sound again
The elfin call that drew
Mild laughter from grim Pain
And filled my heart anew
With dreams that pruned their
glittering wings
And sang sweet saving things.

VIA DOLOROSA

BETWEEN the forest and the sea
Came melancholy song to me,
As though the music of all birds
Was blent and set to human words,
And their clear joy in counterplace
To sadness of the human race.

How strangely those blithe notes were wrung
And by the surge of sorrow stung,
Whilst saddest words, that tongue can tell,
In that melodious miracle,
Were wonderfully touched and blent
With bliss as in a ravishment.

Till Joy lived in the depths of Pain,
And Joy's own heart was filled again
With sweetness greater than her own,
That is in sorrow found alone,
And all Love's harmony sublime
O'erwhelmed the chords of tide and time.

I seemed a shadow faint and far
And scattered thin as shadows are,

But something of me more intense
Was drawn away from human sense,
To feel the numbers grand and terse,
Harmonious, of the Universe.

A music with great chords and strong
Beyond the power of human song,
More wonderful than joy, more sweet
Than sorrow, more than both complete,
Tender, magnificent,—the voice
Of Morning Stars when they rejoice.

Wisdom and power made advance
In strength o'er change and circumstance,
And chance, bright cloud that oft obscures
The greater brightness which endures,
Using its glory as its own,
Was melted and like feathers flown.

I saw in Nature's preying strife
And necessary lust for life,
The self create through death and pain,
The process of the soul made plain,
The littleness of life, the high
Estate of death and destiny.

No gnat falls slain, but something more
Is added to the psychic store.
Within the spider's web no fly
Hangs crucified in agony,
But something from those pangs is bred
To build a strength beyond the dead.

The bird and spider that so live
Through longer days and fugitive,
Not these, I knew, survive as they
That suffered, served, and passed away
To rise in Nature's wondrous whole
Through evolution of the soul.

Far-trailed like shadowed shapes of cloud
The music swept, now soft, now loud,
Fading away, till time and place
Absorbed again the human race,
And as through veils of dazzling mist
Rose human hopes like spires sun-kissed.

Then heard I through that mighty strain
The earth-notes tremulous again,
The bird-songs trilled from tree to tree,
And in my heart a song of glee,
And melancholy song no more
Between the forest and the shore.

TRIUMPH

GOLDEN the year goeth out with rich spoils
heavily laden,
Leaving the woodland-towns desolate, sacked,
and bare,
Towns that as gay Spring he entered with pipe,
youth merry, and maiden
Dancing to timbrel and song. Where is his
music?—Ah, where?

Still is the pæan and triumph? Autumn, slow and
relentless,
Going with silent tread, leadeth his labouring train.
Stripped and packed are his gay pavilions now, and
the tentless
Fields are littered and left marred and mouldered
again.

How shall he enter his city? With resonant music
and streaming
Colours flaunted before corded waggon and slave?
Truth shall he tell?—how he came as a friend and
by treacherous seeming
Ravished the love of the wise, baffling the hearts
of the brave?

Durst he with laughter declare how be broke such
sanctified pledges ?

Durst he make boast of his false cunning and conquest of stealth ?

Hears he not still, like a doom, now the whispering
cry through the sedges ?

Shall he not creep, like a thief, silently home with
his wealth ?

ST. LUKE'S LITTLE SUMMER

LONG since the swallows gathered, wheeled, and
flew,

But still the lark is lifted by his song
Above the heavier clouds that blot the blue,
With heart as true and confidence as strong.

Hath he alone, of all those birds that made
Spring sweet with sounds of passionate delight,
Found love continuous, that undismayed

And solitary he singeth in the height ?
Yet hath his song a melancholy strain,

As though the Autumn had some sadness still
For love triumphant. Hath he lost again
His mate ?—lamenting over dale and hill.

Alas ! perhaps alone upon the air
He findeth lonely love too great to bear.

THE QUEST

LONG had he sought for the imperishable glory
and immortal joy

Hidden beyond the joyous vanities and the stern
Follies of treacherous Renown, who riseth wantonly
to destroy

The little of peace that she seemed so diligent to
earn.

Not in the honourable guerdons of war, nor the
brilliant proud

Cold satisfactions of wisdom, nor even in the brave
And passionate pursuit of Beauty, who honoureth
not the living aloud,

But soundeth her clarion only o'er the silence of
the grave.

Not even in the fine adoration of love fully did he
find

His quest, till he turned into mercy his hatreds,
to the breath

Of pitiful love his pride, his desire to devotion to
mankind.

Then found he unsought the true glory that is
greater than death.

TRENCH PSALM

I LOOKED out upon the lovely skies of summer,
and I cried : " How can ye be so calm and I
so troubled ? "

How wax ye so fair and bright, ye skies of morning ?
Ye skies of noon, so serene ? and so tender
ye skies of evening ?

Have ye no compassion ? Are ye blind or altogether
unheeding : that so inconsiderate ye seem and
so untroubled ?

Almost I hated you for your quiet indifference
and beauty : so aloof with delight, and so close with
mockery and dispassion.

O charitable skies, be ye calm and beautiful for
ever : for ye look down too upon friends afar who
forget not.

Shut out the terror of battle awhile and the agony
of waiting : cover them with thy wings, till they
dream of happiness unbroken.

Fill them evermore with beauty and delight ; for
they love you : for looking down so tenderly upon
me also.

As they do I love, as they am I delighted : O
lovely skies, forgive my bitterness and upbraiding !

TO OSWALD COULDREY IN INDIA

O SWALD, 'tis long since you and I sat down
To home-made bread and cheese and foaming
ale

In some thatched Berkshire tavern hardly known
Upon the Downs or in the White Horse vale,
Where 'mid the village folk we sat and heard

The gossip of remote and peaceful ways,
And war was but a rural prophet's word

That now so heavily fills all our days.

Yet though the times are changed and distance bars

Our old enjoyments, and the earth resounds
With noise and tumult of terrific wars,

Yet often for a while my heart rebounds

From its tense love for those who may be slain,

And meets with yours upon the Downs again.

September 1917.

TRENCH WARFARE

THE glory of war is departed ; the glamour and
glitter,

The chivalrous pride of battle is forgotten and
dead ;

And the fire
And beauty of courage is supplanted by sordid and
bitter,
Albeit more heroic and splendid, endurance
Instead.

No longer we fight face to face with our foemen as
gallant
Under God in those brave open spaces, no longer
as of old
Eye to eye
Do we match, as true brothers in battle, honour's
love and hand's talent,
Not the brief bright strife and swift issue unem-
bittered
Behold.

But we deal the invisible blow from afar and un-
ashamed;
We are slaves of our own proud inventions. The
machine is our lord.
Under ground
We cower from the creatures of fire that too skil-
fully we have tamèd.
And the wrath of a day we make years' strife and
hatred
Abhorred.

We lie and lurk and shatter with our engines tremendous,
Marring in a moment God's beauty and the beauty
that man
Through the long
Laborious years has fashioned with a love to attend
us.
O fools of Time, have we learned naught since
battles
Began ?

WILLOWS

LAUGHTER on laughter fell
Quick, unconsumable,
Where 'neath the willows flowed
The river, lightly
Loitering upon his way,
Curved in a little bay
Which the pale lily strowed
With blossoms brightly.

Smitten with pleasure, I
Turned lightly to espy
Who, 'mid the blossoms, made
Awhile so merry,

Under the feathery leas
Slant of the willow trees
Cautiously I surveyed
Each holt and bury.

Children were these of Man
Couth ? or wild folk of Pan
Met with some nymph unshy ?
Or had the River
Leapt streaming from his bed,
Capturing ere she fled
Back to her willow nigh
Some Sprite for ever ?

Whether 'twas this or this,
Lest I should break such bliss
Needless, or haply see
Beyond the cover
Trivial joy that would
Dash my own dreams of good,
Snatching my Willow Tree
From her fond lover,

Softly I turned away
Lest I might still betray,
Seeing not and unseen.
And now unknowing,

Often and still I hear
Laughter so quick and clear,
Sweeter than might-have-been,
Through my heart flowing.

LITANY

SWEET English words, pure language beautiful,
Make me your vessel, and my thought your
slave !

Use us for your creation, though we gave
Ourselves much pride and dared to deem you dull
Dead matter to our hands for us to pull,
Select, and shape for concept, rime and stave,
And held that we created and could save
You by our use and make you memorable.

—You, who were still our teachers and our lords
Creative, and our sovereign sure delight !

You that had power to make us by your use
Eternal, you, immortal English words !

—Us, but dead matter in our pride's despite,
Choose us who contrite are, pure words, oh,
choose !

DANÄE

I N the stilly night,
When stars were sparkling
Crisp and bright,
In the chilly night,
Through the darkling,
Resonant air
He came, as though all the stars of heaven
Fell from their places rosily driven
With flaming hair.

Like as to rushing seas the sands are
When the tide floods in amain,
Quick as my outflung, passionate hands are
Responsive to my brain,
Still I lay in a moment's wonder,
Broken upon, his strong waves under ;
Then was I all flung out, one gesture
Fain, by that mighty power !
—Embraced, enwreathed, as in burning vesture,
By that mystical Golden Shower.

THE BIRD OF FELICITY

THE bird of Felicity flew,
And flying he sang ;
And those who dreamed they were glad,
At the sound of his singing grew sad,
And those that were sad—not a few—
With the joy of it rang.

And some only heard, as they knew,
A crane's homeward clang ;
Though the notes were as tender tears,
And sweet and old as the years,
When the bird of Felicity flew,
And flying he sang.

Some heard not his music at all ;
But they felt him go by
Like an eagle who passes unseen
Silent cruel and keen
With hunger, and gathered to fall
Like a bolt from on high.

And some searched the height at the sound
For the breast of the lark ;
Though they knew that a swan in the sky
Was winging out westward to die,
And a shadow was cast on the ground
And their spirits grew dark.

Some heard but the sound of his wings,
And they wistfully said,
“ The swallows are flying home ! ”
And some, “ Lo, the swallows are come ! ”
And they looked for the love that is Spring’s,
And found Autumn’s instead.

Some heard not his wings nor his song,
For though Winter was there,
They lacked not the leaves that were shed,
For their hearts clothed the boughs o’erhead,
Filling them with music as strong
As his own in the air.

The bird of Felicity sang
Aloft as he flew,
And his music was mellow and loud ;
But it fell like rain from a cloud,
Nay, soft as from vapours that hang
Is the fall of the dew,

THE BIRD OF FELICITY

Like trumpets for triumph that clang
And for clemency too
Was his call ; but it crept like a sigh,
For so far in the depths of sky
The bird of Felicity sang
Aloft as he flew.

THE WHIRLWIND

(DIVES' SONG FROM " LIFE ")

I HEARD one singing at the skies,
" The beauty of self-sacrifice
Makes fair the trees of Paradise
With blossom of eternal Spring
And fruit for ever ripening ! "
Far, far away I heard him sing.

He sang the purity of pain,
The grace of high things sought in vain,
The charity of loss made plain ;
Then nearer, with unchanging breath,
He sang with joy, that conquereth,
The stern, high dignity of death.

But soon the beauty of his song
Rose like a tempest whirled along
That wrapped me as in thunder strong,
And bore me to a lonely place,
And left me standing face to face
With my own self in dread disgrace.

There was no sound or shadow there,
But thirsty desert brown and bare
As my disastrous soul's despair.
And like a dead man I surveyed,
Heart-broken, contrite, and afraid,
The Paradise that I had made.

Then durst not look, lest I might bring
To sight some ugly fearful thing
Born of my life's mismanaging.
Now thought I, " Ah, that I might go
One moment back from death to show
My friends, lest they be brought to woe ! "

THE ELUSIVE SHEPHERD

COME, gentle shepherd, come !
That mindest here thy flocks,
Between these barren rocks.

Arise and hie thee home.

Among the hills all day

Thy piping have I heard ;

But though I long have sought,

Lo, I have found thee not,

Nor any answering word

To my far calls. But, aye,

Thou pipest as far away.

Why nearer not at all

Can I approach thy flock ?

And ever at my call

Seem'st thou more far to be ?

Oh, from some neighbouring rock

Arise at last to mock

And hie thee home with me !

Thy wether-bells are sweet

Upon the evening air.

Where are thy cotes ? Ah ! where

The tracks that know thy feet ?

By what steep paths unknown
Which I not yet have watched
Leadest thou now thy sheep ?
To what warm wattles deep
Among the dales, close-thatched ?
Ah ! faint thy pipes are grown,
And I am left alone,
My searching to retrace
With ever fresh despair.
There is no secret place
That I know not too well
To seek thee vainly there.
Where are thy cotes ? Ah, where,
Sweet shepherd ! Who can tell ?

MAID MARGARET

(FROM "LIFE")

O MARGARET, the winds are high
And gulls are blown across the sky,
So great white simple thoughts of thee
Backward adown my heart are blown,
And then are swiftly rapt from me
By passion's gusts, and far are strown,

The winds are high ; the gusts are strong ;
And rooks are swept in cloudy throng,
So flocks of blacker fears are cast

Across my dreaming heart's wild track.
May those white labouring thoughts at last
Alone win back !—alone win back !

THE POET

THROUGH the melodious intricacies of deep and
penetrable song,

Down travelled roads, and new-trampled, hardly
visible ways,

And old tracks overgrown and undiscovered long,
Whose wonderful lost use he followed with a
freshness of praise,

Beautifully seeking Beauty he went eagerly and
alone,

Delayed long by delectable paths that pilgrims
had made,

And marvelling at the Mystery of the Goal that had
drawn from such splendours, though un-
known,

For possible short ways he looked since so frequently
he had stayed.

Or pushing adventurous now through the tangled
loveliness of the wild
Sweet virgin forest, with sudden and unpre-
meditated zest
And improvident desire, or the curious wayward-
ness of a child,
He broke new paths that allured from the cer-
tainty of the rest.

LEON AND RHODOPE

RHODOPE :

WHY comest thou sadly from the wildwood,
Thy cheeks pale and thy brow so overcast ?
This long time thou hast left thy supper
Unfinished, though carefully I have dressed it
And set dainties before thee which thy heart
Well loveth. And the bright-beaded cider
Thou hast left in the beaker untasted. Forgotten
Are thy pipes which thou soundedst so merrily
Through winter by the bright flaming logs.
Ever nursing thy sad heart, what fretful
Young memory rockest thou in vain ?

LEON :

In vain would I tell thee incredulous
The mysterious story. And believing
Thou still wouldst dissuade me, being fearful,
With dissimulation of belief.

But hearken, for I needs must disburden
Sorrowfully my breaking heart.

Awhile where the river runs looping
Among the alders I was fashioning
Deeper a new channel for a sheep-wash.
And one day, arising from my labour,
Wearily I sate upon the turf.

By chance I looked towards the alders :
And there I saw peering forth
A Goddess or fair Nymph of the Waters.
Never saw I mortal maiden

So sad and so beautiful upon earth,
And on Olympus are none more divine.
Sad and still as pale waters, when evening
Broods dreaming upon their passion, was her
brow :

Like waves tinged with crimson of sunset
The ripple of her lips : like the flowings
Of streams, all aquiver with beauty,
Ran swiftly and unplashing with splendour
The unstemmed torrent of her hair.

Then she spake. A melodious water
Slow-dropping to deep pools was her voice.
Even as her beauty it seemèd
To come sweetly from far, like a memory
Haunting, old, and divine.
“ Why breakest thou the course of my waters,
O Shepherd ! ” she cried. “ Have thy pastures
Failed thee this long while ? and surpassed
Are thy beautiful sheep ? Have I loved thee
Amiss, that so cruelly thou makest
Me harm in return ? ”

Then unfinished
I left the deep channel, and often
Delicately she came through the alders,
Conversing of love ; but ever fled
Sadly from my approach, and forbidding me
With tears, as she knew that disaster
Attended merciless my desire.
But alas ! now that Hippias had marked
My labour neglected, and with generous
Zeal so disasterously hath wrought me
Good service in secrecy of soul.
For, though thoroughly I have stanked the deep
channel,
Restoring blameless her bright waters,
Though I call bitterly, now she cometh no more.

" UPON A SPIDER'S WEB I BLEW "

UPON a spider's web I blew :
From his thick-woven den he ran
Unerring to the shaken clew,
And stood in wonder for a span :
—What thing might so his kingdom shake
And leave it thus without a break !

Such strange escape ! He tried and found
The sticky thread was fresh and true,
Then sought his den with swift rebound.
Again upon his web I blew,
And blew again ; but he no more
Slipped even to his chamber-door.

But while I stood, perchance there flew
A fly imprudent 'mid the snare.
Ere I could think what he would do,
Upon the victim quivering there
The spider closed, had gone, had set
It duly larded in his net.

ROMANCE OF ROSES

HOW wonderfully did God dispose
This dark red rose,
All thunder-coloured in his state
Most passionate!
He hath the very rage of love
All flowers above,
And pride that stands against all odds,
Man's pride or God's.

How tenderly did God dispose
This paler rose,
With all the curves of loveliness
In one compress,
All Hebe's hues from head to feet
Captured complete,
And all that sovereign love that yields
But wins all fields!

When lion-hearted men are dead,
Doth God dispose
Indignant ghosts to fill the red
Dark wondering rose?

I have small doubt but women fair
Have died to dress
Each paler rose, that folds the air,
With loveliness.

RECREATION

WIND-BLOWN meadows !
Meadows all bloom-ablear amid glittering
grasses !
Yolk-broken laughs and white-froth fine de-
light !
Still in inviolable youth my spirit passes,
A bare-limbed boy amid the wind-blown meadows,
Though I grow old, this starry winter's night.

Cream-slurred cowslips.
Wind-whipt, aflush ! Tall buttercups flare-yellow !
Moondaisy-curd to a milky mist out-strown !
My spirit-dances and with feet all mealy-mellow,
Feeling betwixt his crouchy toes the creaming cow-
slips,
And round his chin the dancing daisies blown.

“ I SEARCHED AWHILE ”

I SEARCHED awhile the earth and skies
To learn that secret thing which lies
Untold in tender creatures' eyes,
That wonder on itself intent,
That expectation which is pent
With memory sad and innocent.

That fearful pity, that most fair
Exceeding pathos of love's care,
That beauty deeper than despair,
And oft I answered as I sought,
“ Would God by gentle means had wrought
For perfect beauty of His thought ! ”

If He had power and command
To make the beauty that He planned
At once without this heavy hand,
Why thus by process long and slow
With warp of pain and woof of woe
Weaves He life's piecey fabric so ?

Yet in the lovely fragments left
Littered upon the broken web,

In beauty beautifully bereft,
I saw with still entrancèd soul,
Like one who sees fresh dreams unroll,
More than perfection of the whole !

The dule and sadness of our lot
Like passing clouds I had forgot.
Even God's wrath I heeded not.
But in an ecstasy I cried,
“ Beauty hath more than justified
What means soe'er He hath applied ! ”

THE HEWING

HE had hardened his heart against the hewing of
pitiless sorrow,
Then rose and strove with it, striking fiercely and
long,
Scarring the stubborn surface with a deeper anguish,
Until at length he quarried a rugged crag of song.

Hewn out and untrimmed he sent it terribly re-
bounding,
A perilous devastation, adown the shuddering
steep,

Till, shorn by furious attritions and rounded by
destructions,
It sank to rest in Memory's valley smooth and
deep.

And the cave love lit with a tender fire of passion,
And his heart grew warm and molten, filling
from above,
Yielding itself wholly, undesolate, as a habitation
Again unto the pity and brave desire of love.

GRATIAS AGAM

NOW will I thank and praise
Be it God or Chance who set
Me here amid my days,
A living creature yet.

Him will I praise and bless,
Whatever may befall,
With proper thankfulness
That I have been at all.

If I must cease,—Ah me,
My dear dead friends !—and pass
As naught again to be,
Who once but nothing was,

GRATIAS AGAM

My loss how shall I know ?
I do enjoy my gain,
And hardly can allow
That love will not remain.

Therefore I thank and praise,
As since I live I must,
The Author of my days.
And as I love I trust.

THE WATER-RAT

(ON A THAMES BACKWATER)

THERE sits the wise old water-rat
Upon the discèd lily plat.
Now musing he just squats and winks,
And now his funny hands he links
And strokes his beard. His busy race
Unseen are heard about the place
Moving softly to and fro,
Or where the broadest flag-blades grow,
With grinding teeth they saw a flag.
You see it shiver there and sag,

And fall, and with a sudden sway
Being drawn mysteriously away,
Whether to deck with arras green
Their chambers in the bank unseen,
Or line a rude and watery nest,
Or for some use less manifest,
To make a causeway firm and strong
For busy folk to pass along—
The certain end I cannot tell,
Though I have watched their labour well.

But that old vain proud water-rat
That muses on the lily plat
Like some quiet sage or king may be
Nursing his royal dignity,
Unmoved will let my boat go by,
Seeing no danger in my eye.
Or if I with an idle whim
Pretend a foolish war on him,
Quite leisurely will take the clear
Water, and scorning safety near
Cross unsubmerged the open tide
With rippling ease and wake-way wide,
And climb the further bank, and stay
As though he wished to come that way,

Shaking the water from his feet
And scorning further fond retreat.
But if he marks a certain foe,
As he has the sure gift to know,
He plunges, and his folk around
Hurry to safety at the sound.
And silence like a late-rung bell
Hangs in his secret citadel.

SWALLOWS

GLANCE and glint of swallows through the
bright sun-watery weather
Stirred the pale blue drowsiness of noon with
peerless flight.
So my heart goeth over with the deep summer day
together,
Filled with white breasts and purple pinions of
delight.
Stay ! blue mariners of air, ye gay familiar strangers
Thronging our northern ports as of old, stay ye
and declare
Are these that fly in my heart your adventurous
brother rangers ?
Or only your beautiful shadows haunting there ?

Tell me ! or are they birds of my heart native but
misremembered,
Long-slumbering joys that now your rivalry hath
stirred ?
Slept they—were they those pendulous bat-things ?
—through days distempered,
Seeming more demon of dread than delightful
bird ?

MISERICORDIAM DOMINI IN ÆTERNUM
CANTABO

NOW first along the Garden came
The maidens two by two
With bended heads ; and in their hands
They carried sprigs of yew.

And after them the Innocents,
The children bright and fair,
Came with sweet music in their throats,
And garlands in their hair.

Then followed the tall Magdalen,
With gracious steps and slow,
And at her side a kinglly Man,
With thorns upon his brow.

LITTLE SILVER BELLS

THE skies are filled with twinkling stars
Like little dancing silver bells,
So swiftly shook that no one tells,
Save by their constant winks of light,
That they are tossed upon the night !

How sweet their spirit music falls,
Too fine for mortal ears to hear ;
And none might tell they rang so clear
But that a sweeter sense than sound
Or silence in the heart is found !

EROS

“ COME, Love, sweet brother, come !
And let no thought delay,
No shadow of to-morrow,
The pleasure of to-day ;
Nor yesterday's event
Let it not raise lament.

No antique fond desire
Shall trespass on our track,
Nor with a wistful call
Bid us look sadly back,
No peeping hope entice
Too far our searching eyes.

Not glancing back nor forth,
I'll stand in one sweet place,
And all day long I'll look
Upon thy lovely face.
Not all the days to be
Shall find me moved from thee ! ”

TIME AND THE NIGHTINGALE

THOU by remembering still thine antique pain,
Amid the leafy boughs and loveliness
Making such music ! a sure anodyne
For all pain else but thine,
Charmedst me wholly to forget again .
What I thought unforgettable—unless
I might awake by a miracle divine,
And find but dream these days that now oppress.

Ah ! would that Time had so himself outrun,
 And for his bitter jest made sweet amends,
 Having, as Love will sometimes, learned to tease
 To leaven gentle ease

And charm away what he himself hath done.

Would he could turn again from his sad ends,
 And wake me in the unlost days of peace,
 And give me back now all my perished friends !

For thee Time hath no passage, never leaves
 Those days of horror and distress behind :
 Why, then, hath he with such a haste o'erpast
 My days of joy, that cast
 Beyond the dust, that his departure weaves,
 A fainter fleeting shadow on the mind ?
 Hath he no unanimity at last,
 Save a strong purpose to be most unkind ?

ST. SIMEON STYLITES

SWEET call from the dark,
 Thou star-like voice that arisest
 Ever upon the moonless night, the dreadful calm of
 woe,
 Silverly shedding, ah !
 More comfort than the wisest
 Friend, more grace than the greatest joys bestow.

From thee have I learned
The sad love of Tribulation,
Stronger than gladness, than hope more delicate and
secure,
Fierce lover ! and from thee
God's mercy of salvation,
Who chasteneth me from joys to the bliss that shall
endure.

TWILIGHT

NOW rose the wind, the shepherd of the sky,
And drave his huddled, golden-fleecèd flocks
To cool green western pastures glimpsed afar
Beyond the gloaming bar,
Where not long since with fiery-softened shocks,
Like waves slow-winning over reefs and rocks,
The Day had passed and dropped the evening star.

A lantern at his tilted chariot hung,
A silver outpost on his sleep's domain,
A jewel from his raiment broken free
—All these the star might be,
A loss, guard, warning, or in her window-pane
Had some maid set a light to guide her swain ?
Or be a sign afar for him to see ?

All this thought I as I stood dreaming there
And watched the day die down by fine degrees,
Being drawn away from sadder thoughts ; till now,
 Rustling from bough to bough,
The wind came, filling all the leafy trees
With sighing ghosts and sombre memories,
And brought me back as grief alone knows how.

Of you I thought, and you, and all the rest
Of those gay hearts that once were sharing too
In nature's pride and pathos, every mood
 Of glory and of good,
With greater joy than nature could endue,
The hallowing of love :—alas ! of you
Whose whispering ghosts so fill the teeming wood.

Now all those iris colours, that love casts,
Grief had removed ; and I saw Nature bare,
And marvelled, when I knew her cruel and cold,
 Tyrannic, uncontrolled
And pitiless, that she had seemed so fair ;
And all the preying of her creatures there
Turned my heart's youth to something sick and old.

And while I thought, along the forest came
A man who bore a faggot on his back,
And in his hands two rabbits and a snare.

He whistled, free from care,
A gay old country tune that wandered back
To sadness now and then, as though to track
Some fond elusive pleasure to his lair.

The frost of age had touched his hair and beard,
But left him straight and hearty and unchilled,
His eyes still summer-bright, and most serene

His seamed and ruddied mien.
And strong enough he seemed, if he had willed
To strive with many a younger man as skilled
As he, who lost not yet what he had been.

“Good night!” he said, and stopped. For as he
spoke

A rabbit squealed and broke into the glade,
And after it, lithe, arrowy, without sound,

Snake-like along the ground,
A stoat shot at his wearied victim, made
Fast hold behind its ears, shook it, and laid
It dead and quivering by a mossy mound.

Then turning saw us, and made swift retreat.

“ How strange this Nature is ! ” the old man said,

“ With all its waste of life and cruel need

That things must kill to feed.”

Raising in his left hand the rabbits dead,

He looked at me and sadly shook his head,

“ And we’re no better than the beasts indeed ! ”

LEAVES

L IGH T eddies of leaves

Are, withering, whirled in the way,

Blank playthings of winds,

Though they seem to be making the play,

Dead things that appear to be living and joyous

And far from decay.

Young creatures intent

They seem, and careless as breath,

In the shallows of life

Ere the dark depths gather beneath,

They seem ;—but the youth that they have is the
piteous

Youngness of death.

THE ROBIN

'MID the golden silence of the foliage falling
I heard a robin softly start to attune his note,
Mellow to some mysterious gentle spirit calling
Upon his heart, and filling with faint sweet song
his throat.

Robin, piping there amid the golden shower
Song mingling joy and sorrow in such a whim
divine,
Languidly piping, as thou wert careless of thy sweet
power,
What antique spirit hath so possessed that heart
of thine ?

AUTUMN

NOW Autumn stands beside the golden sheaves
Like Ceres, still and stately, mild and fair,
Browned like the first ripe turning of her leaves,
And like the aspens silvering through her hair,
A gracious matron, fruitful, wise, and kind,
With eyes that somewhat sadly look afar,
As though they dwelt on days long left behind,
Or on the untold days that future are.
Can this have been the shy, white-bodied maid
Who through the April woods crept half-afraid ?

THE NEBULA

DEEP, in the silent spaces of my vasty thought,
Starrily filled and peaceful as ensuing night,
When after boisterous storm the inviolable heavens
Liquidly are alight,

—Lieth a kindled vapour like a silver mist,
Delicate, distant, hardly to be told or seen,
But large and beautiful, bright with imperishable
promise,
Magnificent, serene.

Grand in the closer prospect of my soaring hope.
Glowing from the very furnace of my fierce desire,
The mighty Nebula, molten, dividually cooling,
Habitably from fire,

Roareth in throes of planetary rending change,
Nucleused, consummating the creative scheme,
My heart's imagined delight, the conceived perfection
Labouring in my dream.

“ I WILL GO FAR TO SEEK ”

I WILL go far to seek
What never yet was found,
The sight of lovely scent,
The scent of lovely sound ;
Though I the one have seen,
And the other sweetly smelt
Among the meadows green,
Whenas in dreams I dwelt.

In slumber I have known
One sense divine and free
Which draws sight, scent and sound
From all fair things that be ;
And I such joy have got
From those wild dreamland ways,
That with the same sweet lot
I'd crown my waking days !

TO HAPPINESS

HERE in our water brooks
Bathe thou thy travelled feet,
And make the waters sweet
With thy reflected looks.
Though cooler streams than ours
And fairer lands invite,
Where softer banks than these
Are spreaded for thine ease,
Oh, still delay thy flight !
A few short gracious hours
Shall little tax thy powers,
And blessing us shall make
Our land, that yearneth so,
The sweeter for thy sake.
Oh, pass not on thy way !
Nor hasten thus to go !
Ah ! though we little owe,
A little while delay !

The lands that call afar,
The beautiful and free,
What need have they for thee
That so delightful are ?

And ours, that fain were fair
If only for thy love,
That they might bid thee stay
Among their fields for aye.

With no desire to rove,
Are desolate and bare !
But if thou lingerest there

A moment sweet and strong,
Ah me, how they are blessed !

We would not rob thee long
Of sweeter lands ! Beguile
Our hearts, that lie oppressed,
With but a moment's rest !
Oh, stay with us awhile.

SEA-GULLS

BLENT with the break of the blenching waves
and the hushed white noise of the snowy
fringes—

Noise that seems like a crudded silence cast
from the depths all soft and hoar—

Float and fly the white gulls, leaping clear when the
coiling wave impinges,

Sailing rocked o'er the running ridge that rolls
unchecked and unbroken to shore,

Rising now in a flakey flight from the rocks they
fleck and the waves they litter,
Gleaming they fly, sun-washed, o'er the purple
main and gather the skies afar ;
Wheeling against the azure air they flash and fade,
and then poise and glitter,
Swiftly to dive, and with misty splash to vanish,
each like a falling star.

YEAR-END

L ONG since has Spring to soberer Summer
turned,
And Summer saddens into Autumn now ;
And all those pregnant fires that danced and burned
Within the young year's heart, and 'neath his brow
Filled sometimes with a smoke of dream his eyes,
Sometimes with liquid moods of wavering heat,
And sometimes with love's steadfast light that lies
Still as the skies and clear as streams that fleet,
—Like wind-unshaken flags now droop without
In lustreless and lifeless flames that keep
Their hues but mild as memories veiled in doubt,
Like Melancholy lying half asleep.
Having burned outward and consumed the year,
Fuelless they die and flakily disappear,

THE GORSE BUSHES

(TO THE SHADE OF GOETHE)

BETWEEN these shrubs of gorse, that rattle
With musketry of ripened seed
In vague and desultory battle
Each against each, as though indeed
Their snipers only now and then
Just stirred the drowsy war again,

—The fearless spider sure has flung,
Swinging with her shrewd skill divine
'Twixt these belligerents, and hung
At last her slender lariat-line,
A frail suspension-bridge that she
May cross in calm neutrality.

A thread too slight to bear a bee,
Which yet a tempest has not torn,
So fine and pliable and free
To stand what else could not be borne,
And yet beyond all strength made sure
Like thought through turmoil to endure,

THE LOST LYRE

WINTER

(FROM "LIFE")

SPRING'S fine reality was Summer's dream and
Autumn's yearning.

'Tis Winter's joy to scatter, mock, and mar,
To trample out the Autumn's melancholy burning
And make the dream of summer branchy stark and
naked,

Unprivacied to every cold-eyed star !

Breaker of splendid yearning ! mischievous, most
pitiless spoiler

Of dreams ! grown heavy with their own excess.

So do we call thee heartless ? Oh, thou silent toiler
Who clearest for no price or praise the things that
cumber,

Thou brave Forerunner of Spring's fresh loveliness !

THE LOST LYRE

(AN EXPERIMENT)

A :

WHY makest thou melody no longer
Sweet upon the swift lute strings,
That used so tenderly to beguile us
With immortal song ?

Hath He, the Far-darter, so bewitched thee
That moody thou liest and as silent
As old Memnon after sunrise ?
Why huggest thou ever like a dead child
This antique curious lyre ?
Nor allowest thy fingers, like sheep
Impulsive from the fold at dawn time
To leap lightly over their wonted pasture,
Thine own more beautiful lyre ?

B :

Now, hearken, and I will tell thee.
Wandering through the Pine Grove
Below Hymettus,
I came to the Cærulean lake.
And lying there, drowsed by the bee noise
And the heavy hanging sweetness
Of the flowers, and the breathless heat,
Lost in languorous meditation
I mused of melodies
And lovely song divine ;
Till suddenly the sun was shafted
By a fleecy cloud,
And a bright ray fell searching
On a bramble that grew anigh.
Then gazing I saw, astonished,

This lyre entangled
At its roots, and the briers
Thrust trailing through between the strings ;
As though long it had lain there
With all its memories
And slumbering beautiful power.

A :

Now take thy lyre and melodious
As of old make thy story,
Filling sweetly the pauses and more delicate
Making thy marvellous words !

B :

Featly clove I the brier-stems
That encumbered the music,
Took the lyre to my bosom,
Drew my hand o'er the resonant strings,
And wondered that I found it
After long lying
So sweetly attuned :
—Nay strung to notes sweeter
Than skill ever dreaming allowed,
And to concords more marvellous
And mighty than love's.

Such melody sprang out unmastered
Beneath my fingers,
Overwhelming, sweet, terrible, divine,
Rending !—that I no longer
Can endure the old music
That once I made tenderly
When ye were beguiled.

A :

Take then the strange lute,
And, touching it splendidly,
Again win the music celestial
And glory like fire !

B :

Ah ! there lieth heart-break
And madness. Too sweet is
That virulent music immortal,
That passion too strong.
And therefore no longer
As of old I make melody,
But sit silent and moody,
Ever hugging like a dead child
This antique curious lyre,

THE ROSE

I PRAISED the rose bloom for her whiteness :
Then winter filled the rose with snow
And sheeted all the world with brightness—
Ah ! rose, well bendest thou thy head
Ashamed. Oh, rose, discovered !
Oh, blushing rose, where is the whiteness
Thou ownedst not so long ago ?

Behold the pale and cloistral lily !
Still white and unashamed she towers,
Pure as the snow is and as chilly.
Oh, generous rose, lift up thy head !
Forget the words that I have said !
I leave the winter to the lily,
And whiteness to less lovely flowers.

SKYLARK

FROM the skies, invisible one,
Fell thy song, as rose the sun,
Like a gossamer thread suspended
Wheredown dewdrops race and run,
Coil-caught for a tremulous moment
On that quivering thread fine-spun,

Each o'er-racing and globe-blended,
In such ecstasy swift descended
That where one note's music ended
And another's was begun,
It were vain and hard to tell
As the earth spot where unthreaded
Those fleet drops to silence fell !

TO —

TO music the world awakens
For the rising sun :
Beauty and love are mingled :
Their search is done.
The spring flows over with passion and joys abound ;
But my spirit searches yet,
And my heart cannot forget,
And my joy has left his raiment and is no more
found.

Thou wast my music of Morning,
My wakening fair,
My marriage of Earth and Heaven ;
And thou art my despair !

Oh, how can I look on Love and Beauty again !
For naked my joy is fled,
My heart hath covered her head,
And my searching spirit calleth, and oh ! must call
in vain.

TO BEAUTY

I THEE have worshipped long,
And sought thy secret ways,
And made thee prayer and praise
And jubilation of song.
And I thee fair have found
Where others found thee not,
And fairest in the strife
And common ways of life
Where thou hadst been forgot
Like flowers upon the ground
Which do so much abound
That they of none are seen,
Of all are trodden down,
—Till from thy way serene
One, who had sought in vain,
Turns back and sees thee strown
Where he had passed alone,
And breaks his heart again.

Now I, who proudly sought
Thy quieter ways remote
That I might so devote
My loneliness of thought,
Found thee but cold as stone
And as a whip severe
That with fierce lashes drove
Me worthless from thy love.

Then turned I back in fear,
And humbled and alone
From far made penitent moan ;
Till I forgot my pride
And durst no more prefer
My worship so denied.
But down sweet human ways,
Amid the stress and stir,
I found, glad worshipper,
The kindness of thy face !

ELEGY IN AUTUMN

LEAF by leaf and silently
Autumn plucks the trees,
Littering those feathers bright
Round her sombre knees.
All the world she strips and lays
Naked for the coldest days.

Little recks the world thereof :

All the world is dead.

Oh, would that I might grasp your hand,

And see again your head !

Or dead like the stripped world might I

Not feel the winter's cold so nigh.

THE FLY'S SOLILOQUY

L ONG since the dreams are faded : long ago
The toilful spider, time, my wings waylaid,
And wound me with his labour cold and slow,
And all around my life a shrouding made,
A subtle web wherein I cannot stir
Nor strain, so skilfully the snare he planned,
And made complete his cage of gossamer.
And there I needs must lie resigned, unmanned,
Spinning from my own bowels fresh webs of thought,
His horrid ape and hapless prisoner ;
Till he shall loose the filmy chains he wrought,
And drink me dry of life-blood to the bone.
Would I had been a hornet that he caught,
Then though I died I had not died alone.

THE WATCHMAN

HE heard the old Lord Marshal mumble,
 " Watchman, what of the night ? "
" The hills with their swollen torrents rumble,
And from the heavens do great stars tumble
Headlong in fiery spite,
If I do read aright.
And lesser stars like watchmen humble
Stand, while their greater brethren stumble,
More steadfast if less bright.
Time like an old tower seems to crumble,
My Lord, and all is infinite,"
Answered the watchman old and white.
" Watchman," said he, " Good night ! "

SONG FROM "LIFE"

GAILY through the woodland are the wild birds
 calling
New love for true with music fresh as Spring,
All the old loves of the ages softly falling—
Sweetly falling through the new songs which they
 sing,

Glad-sweet—the same glad music that enchanted
Eve in the careless Garden long ago,
And sad, the sweeter music that consoled her
While toiling in the barren fields below.

Music as old as love is and as undaunted,
Fresh as the moment's passion and as true—
Gaily through the woodland are those wild joys
vaunted,
And the sadness falls alone, my heart, for you !
Sadness made fine and mellow with the ages.
Oh, merrily sing, ye birds that never tell
The sweetness of your songs through your enjoyment,
Nor all that sweeter sadness of your spell.

THE COTTAGE

I HAVE a cottage, love, for you,
With braided thatch and latticed panes
That looks towards the south to greet
The sunshine or the chattering rains.

Without there is a garden filled
With hollyhocks and roses fair,
Which only needs, to make complete
Its beauty, you to wander there.

Within are ceilings low, and beams,
And shining things upon the shelves,
And comfort that but lacketh now
For perfect happiness ourselves.

LAUS VENERIS

I

SPRING

WONDERFULLY hath Spring disposed his wilderness of blossom: the white flowers and the red, the yellow and the purple flowers.

How tenderly he layeth his leaves upon the air: the fresh green leaves that are delicate as lucent waters.

He filleth the checkered boughs with delightful singing: and the memorable pines with the soft callings of the pigeons.

So, my love, hast thou visited my heart that was with winter: and covered his naked groves with pleasant verdure.

Thou hast filled his skies with glory and his branches with music: and his proud loftier woods with love's murmurous responses.

II

“ MY LOVE IS A DAPPLED DOE ”

My love is a dappled doe that lurketh below the myrtles : wonderfully peering forth ; come shy one from the covert.

Ah me ! what sorrowful great eyes hath beauty : how sad and tender is the secret that haunteth in wild glances.

How knowest thou even of lovely sorrow, my beloved : the earth clotheth herself with Spring to make thee joyous.

Yet more canst thou gladden my heart than the jubilant thrushes : come, sad one, from the shadows and delight me with thy sorrow.

III

“ HOW OFTEN MY THOUGHTS ”

How often my thoughts hasten to thee, my beloved : so often that I know not when they crawl elsewhither.

So far away thou art : so oft and again they journey : yet are they not wearied, but refreshed by their travel.

“Thou art far away,” I said? How cometh it then, my wild one: that my swift thought reacheth thee or ever he hath started?

Can it—Oh, might it be that thy thought is the swifter: and outhastening meeteth mine own even at his outsetting!

While heart calleth to heart: and thought to thought speedeth together.

Yet how could thy thought be swifter than mine, or mightier thy passion: Oh, how much beyond all measure were I then belovèd!

IV

IN THE STORM

The forests rave and rock and shout to one another: the wind roareth through their boughs like fire or tempestuous waters.

Alas! I hear not the words that my belovèd speaketh: but I watch the motion of her lips and am more delighted.

The rude gale scattereth her words in vain. They are gathered swiftly: taking their shape again in my heart they silently are answered.

Oh, generous storm, rage on ! How was I ungrateful : thou showest me her grace and teachest her new delightful gestures.

She telleth not with her lips ; but her eloquent body : hath become at thy bidding all one delectable language.

V

THE TORRENT

My love is like a torrent stream that swiftly floweth : and is poured over into my heart with smoke and thunder.

The glory of her fall is overwhelming : my heart is shaken below and overfloweth.

She cometh silently above, but her going is filled with voices : Oh, why art thou not great enough, my heart, to contain her !

My heart weareth away and is broken by her profusion : though stronger than rock. And yet he is delighted.

For deeper he groweth to constrain the eddies of her beauty : and hold back her pools in new and secret places.

And yet never can he capture the whole beauty

of her being : nor drain her unfailing sources, grow he never so deeply.

She shall fill his basin for ever with fresh fugitive waters : and slowly change the still pools which privily he nurseth.

Yet is she constant in her chance and generous in her taking : what knoweth my heart of loss when so equally she supplieth ?

Rejoice, my heart, that thy love is too beautiful for thy possessing : rejoice that she overfloweth and so bountifully doth escape thee.

For thou art satisfied indeed, and her fleeting waters : are more to thee than the permanence of single glories.

VI

MELIUS PER VER

My heart hath forgotten leaf-fall and naked branches : though days already are clipped and harden into winter.

He buddeth again and covereth himself with blossom : exhaling the fragrance that thy love hath freed from its confinement.

Though the frosts fringe his leaves and his blossom are filled with the snowfall : they take no hurt but are bowèd down with more delicate beauty.

Delighting he shineth afar and cheerfully reflecteth : when winds conspire together to rage furiously about him.

And the sad sighing winds he cheereth from their envy : though the air is soaken with rain he lacketh not for comfort.

My love, more beautiful he groweth through time's distemper : so surely hast thou furnished him with eternal springtime.

VII

“ NO SAD, VACANT HEART ”

No sad, vacant heart hast thou fillèd with thy beauty ; but a heart already abrim with delight and pleasant laughter.

The thirst which maketh sweet and acceptable any water : I had not ; nor had my desire provided thee with beauty.

But my heart was fillèd and plenteous with all things needful : and with all things fair sufficèd beyond desiring.

How wonderful then is thy love that displaceth not this bounty : but beautifully suffuseth it with even greater glory.

VIII

“ THOU LUREST ME NOT AWAY ”

Thou lurest me not away to the lonely mountains :
to set against the dark strength of my love thy
solitary beauty.

Thou art not jealous of the flowers, nor fearest the
running waters : thou needest no desert of the world
for thine off-showing.

Thou needest no dearth to declare thy loveliness
exceeding : but amid the more profusion of beauty
the more beautiful thou appearest.

IX

QUID PERTURBAT

What troubleth the face of the waters ? Why is
my spirit shaken : how cometh upon my flesh the
chilliness of a fever ?

I stand as I were naked and ashamed. Oh, why
can I rejoice not : when tenderly as the dawn my
love approacheth ?

In fine raiment she cometh ; but her beauty burneth up her vesture : she is Eve to my daring heart, and I all Adam.

She enfoldeth me like flames, and I am tormented : Oh, my love ! that my soul could know what my heart seeth.

X

THE PHŒNIX

I am straw to thy touch and to me thy touch is as a firebrand : thy fingers set me aflame and swiftly I am consumed.

Now I am all loftily on fire, and now thin ashes : now the loud brother of the winds, now scattered as their plaything.

How soon I am burned down and utterly extinguished ; and yet how swiftly I arise from ashes like a Phoenix.

If at a touch I am aflame and so fearfully am consumèd : Oh, how shall I ever dare more nearly to approach thee.

And yet if I so splendidly arise from the ashes of this burning : how much more gloriously might I spring from greater conflagration.

XI

EPITHALAMIUM

As soul to soul so my flesh to thy flesh rejoiceth :
I contemn not God by despising the beauty of thy
body.

Neither with arrogant pride rebelleth my soul
against his vesture : the fine cloths of flesh where-
with He pleasantly arrayed him.

He hideth not with shame his bright senses which
God created : deeming they were good. How then
should he deny them ?

Oh, never may he pretend with vain hypocrisy to
have lost them : rather may he rejoice to own and
properly to use them.

Wherefore my body rejoiceth in thine without
lusting : and praiseth God for the beauty of his
bestowing.

When soul calleth to soul and body to body
cleaveth : then know I the fullness of his grace
and love's marvellous consummation.

All glorious within and without all ecstasy un-
sullied : Ah, sweet excess that knoweth no trivial
moderation ;

But is ruled by love's great simple chastity only :

and with touchings of God's earth lighteneth to things eternal.

Who then maketh wiser laws than God in his prudence : or durst destroy the delight which he gave in His loving kindness.

At last I saw thee disrobed, and my strong heart fainted within me : my heart that had doubted not, abashed by so much beauty.

Haste thee ! Haste thee ! my heart cried out ; but my voice was silent : for a trembling and great awe gat hold upon me.

My eyes like prayers of anguish terribly besought thee : yet verily I moved not nor made thee any gesture.

How much more at the touch of thy flesh was I confounded : when we dashed like two white waves at last utterly together.

Blinded was I in the delicious madness of that blending : but I needed sight no longer, for I felt all Beauty.

All that was from the beginning and is for everlasting : knew I in that one ecstatic eternal moment.

The first original Touch had reclaimed his powers : and gathered them again from his four deputed senses.

Sight, sound, sense and smell were gloriously extinguished : and had lost their tributary joys in one exceeding splendour.

Now seemed I as one in a desert amid great solitude and silence : and now as one who standeth upon a shore between roaring waters.

Now amidst ice and snow lonelily I wandered : and now the ragings of great flames were like trees tempestuous around me.

Oh, the silence divine of those solitary broad spaces : and ah, the fine thunder and heat of those sounds tremendous.

—The noise as of the rending of ice, the breaking up of silence : the roarings of the flames, the magnificent shouting of the waters !

So came I on fire at last to the loneliness of Beauty : and there I forgot, and delighted fell upon cool slumber.

WAVE-BREAK, OR SEA MONOTONIES

SOFT with a downy music is the breaking
Of the waves,
White waves,
The waves far-travelled :
Fleecily they break,

94 WAVE-BREAK, OR SEA MONOTONIES

And glide with foam-hemmed edges rock-
unravell'd
Upon the shore,
Thinned out in dissolution,
With a silver sighing
Evermore.

In a white case of death, sweet consummation,
Die the waves,
Tired waves,
The waves far-travelled :
Peacefully they break
And all snow-smothered and milkily dishevelled,
With murmurs hoar,
And gentle resignation,
And a happy sobbing
Evermore.

PASTORAL

SAD shepherd, what is this delightful lay
Thou fillest so with sorrow and desire ?
Dost sing of thine own amorous dismay
And of thine own heart's thirsting from love's
fire ?

Or 'mid these lonely lawns and mountains grand
Hast thou been touched at soul to understand
A little of the secrets at life's core ?
—That so thou seem'st to gather all things fain,
And make them in the haunting of thy strain
More beautiful than joy for evermore.

Could loss of thine make melody so free ?
Thy grief take such an universal tone ?
Could thy love's pain surpass the bounds of thee
And so embrace all passion as thine own ?
Could'st thou with thine own self-encircled lay
So justify with beauty nature's way,
Absorbing self and Nature in Her end ?
For love was never quite so sad as this.
Nor quite so beautiful man's broken bliss ?
Nor bliss so sure to make all ears attend ?

LA VITA NUOVA

MY love hath dispossessed me of myself
And occupied the chambers of my soul :
He hath both robbed me of my pain and pelf
And taken my life's lease to his control :

He hath usurped my motions, will and thought,
And gathered all my treasures for his own,
And all my secrets he to light hath brought,
Nor even hath left my "skeleton" alone.
And I had been an outcast, but I held
The house that he abandoned had for mine,
All great and glorious. And there I dwelled
As if I were a being more divine.
Why did my love desert a house so fair
For mine that was so beautiless and bare?

I would that I had known that he should come
So suddenly to make a lodgement there,
Then had I made provision for his home,
Keeping it swept and garnished with good care.
And I had hanged it all about with grace,
And mended much that now so broken lies,
And moved or hidden all that mars the place.
—Would I, the foolish virgin, had been wise!
Why came he without warning? How is this
That having come he maketh no redress?
But liveth joyful amid things amiss,
Setting his heart upon untidiness.
Came he in haste lest I should mend and mar
What strangely to his soul most lovely are?

Yet though no whit he hath his dwelling deckt,
Nor changed a single chamber that he found
Filled with the faults and freaks of my neglect
And graceless things that do therein abound ;
Though he hath touched no folly that I prized,
Nor any blemished beauty that I hid,
Nor ill assortments that my heart devised,
Nor what I left undone, nor what I did :
—Though he hath swept and garnished not I come
A stranger where I once was wont to dwell,
Marvelling at the beauty of his home
At what his presence brings and doth dispel.
Ah, would that he had left a house less fair
That even I might come with beauty there !

ICHABOD

(FROM “ LIFE ”)

L ONG time he strove to justify God's way,
Standing at bay before his growing fears,
And with the wisdom of his little day
To expound the mystery of the millioned years,
And straining even further to reduce
To terms of finite use
God's majesty eternal ; till at length

He yielded to his fears his fond excuse,
Denying God and love to Nature's strength.

He durst condemn, who had not feared to seek
Excuse for God. And now aghast he fled
Before his fears, grown pitiable and weak,
Hating to die, but longing to be dead.
And all that strength of thought, which once had
held
His foolish heart unquelled,
Served only now to make more dread his foes,
And if he for a moment's respite dwelled,
Dreaming escape, made worse his snatched repose.

But sudden on his path again he saw
The beauty and courageous joy that flies,
Despite her horror and tyrannic law,
On Nature's way. He felt his heart arise
To share them, and with gladder strife to wrest
From Nature all her best,
Breaking his dusty fears up like a clod.
Then found he in his heart made manifest
The eternal love and majesty of God.

BUTTERFLY AND MOTH

THE hope that comes to my heart and hovering
flies,

Now white and pure, now coloured like sunset skies,
Comes splendid and splashed with hues through
the brighter days,
But mild and pale when the shadows of night arise.

O Hope, I love you for wonderful wings divine
With bars of purple and crescents incarnadine ;
But most I love you when sweet as a fluttered
star

On white immaculate wings you shake and shine.

Joy makes you glorious, fine as an autumn leaf,
To float and fall not.—Oh, fall not, Hope ! But grief,
That comes with shadow and storm and in peace
that wanes,

Has shown you pale and lovely beyond belief.

O sumptuous leaves that flicker and fall and die !—
O beautiful death of beauty !—you soon shall lie
Whitening with dull decay. Oh, my bright hopes
blanched !

But the hopes, that are white at birth, for ever fly

JEAN VALJEAN

HE smileth, for such are his sorrows
That joy never sent
A spirit so to encumber
His heart with content—
His heart that was torn but for love to have room
To make way through the rent.

The wound for the sake of the healing
Was worthy the strain :
He knows the solace that burgeons
And blows not again :
His smile in the tender compassion of love
Has but beauty of pain.

ART

MAN'S worshipful fine art lies close
On naked Beauty's cold repose
Like draperies that half conceal
And half concealing more reveal
The lovely graces that still lie
Unseen of any mortal eye.
Upon her virgin self he durst
Not look till he hath veiled it first ;

But through the veils of his desire
For him her glory burns like fire,
Till fair and naked in his sight
She stands before her eremite,
If so his sacred love is pure
Enough her loveliness to endure.

ADONIS

I FOUND him on the leas
Beside the gleaming brook,
Where willows lean and look
Upon their images.
He fair aside had thrown
His silken vesture fine,
And through the glassy stream
Flashed like a sudden dream
Of loveliness divine
That passes hardly known
Through visions of our own.
He leisurely at last
Towards the sunny bank
Came wading in, and cast

Him down and in the sun
 Basked all his lovely length
 That lay like sleeping strength
In Beauty's arms undone.

EXCURSION

I WILL fare forth alone
 And through sweet meadows stray,
Where mating turtles moan
 And butterflies display.
To meet my memory there
How sweetly shall I fare.

Him will I hold awhile
 In converse, honeyed store,
And from his lips beguile
 His sweet and lovely lore,
And secret looks entice
From his far-seeing eyes.

And we will wander far
 Beyond the hedgerow trees,
Beyond the hills that are
 My furthest boundaries ;
Then turn upon our track
And bring fresh sweetness back.

THE WATCHER

WHO art thou that keepest
 Through the red stagnant weather
 Of late October days,
 So quiet that thy silence
 Sinks down into my spirit
 And setteth all his verdure
 Too sombrely ablaze ?

Cold fire ! Wilt thou, who watchest,
 Shred down his glories also
 Thou gavedst undesired ?
 Rather with ruthless fingers
 I would that thou hadst shredded
 His foliage at its greenest
 Ere yet his greenness tired.

NAIADS

BY willow-trees and waters,
 By bladed flags and flowers,
 The River's robeless daughters
 Pursue the gleaming hours,

The flashings of white bodies
Athwart dark boughs are caught,
Are glimpsed and gone, caught only
Like beautiful and lonely
Wild fugitives of thought.

FANTASY

FAST fly the white close swarms of snow,
Like ghosts of Autumn leaves return-
ing :

Reticently cold they go
That once were eloquently burning.

But my heart, forgetting his human house,
Wintereth afar amid dreams of Spring,
Crying, " Who shaketh the orchard boughs
And filleth the air with this dazzling
Fine mist all clotted with petals bright ?
Despoiling the trees for Earth's delight !

Who shaketh the orchard boughs of heaven ?
Where breezes come not with mortal bruit,
And boughs of their blossom are not bereaven,
Nor beauty falleth victim to fruit,
But beautiful bloom and fruit abide
For ever unchanging side by side."

My soul hath wandered far and alone
Beneath the branches, and heareth sing
Wild spirit-beings whose flutings own
The music of God's imagining
Before His dreaming had taken words
And He had created the singing-birds.

And now he claspeth a fine unshaken
Blossomy bough in that stilly lair,
And scattereth o'er the Earth forsaken,
Filling with fluttering snows the air,
And he crieth, " This Beauty at last I give,
Though it rob my heart, that the earth may live ! "

But all the orchards of Heaven shook,
And my fearful soul cried, " Who shall dare
Succour what God awhile forsook ?
Behold He hath shaken the branches bare !
And I must wander in sore disease
For ever below these naked trees ! "

He looked, and behold the world was whitened,
Not with cold snows of yesterday ;
But meadows were misted and branches brightened
With brede of blossoms and masses of May.
The Spring that had fallen from Heaven's boughs
Had filled the earth where he used to house.

Fast fly the white close swarms of snow
Like blossomy gales of Spring's exceeding :
Beautifully pure they go
Unstained by life, of death unheeding.

NUN'S SONG FROM "LIFE"

THE chill-down awns of snow
Across the drift-dim day
By winnowing winds that blow
Are caught and borne away,
To fall at last to Earth made white
With feathery smother bright.

So love came chaste and cold
Upon my Spirit's breath,
And did my heart enfold
Methought in freezy death.
My heart therein got little harm,
Nay, still the more grew warm.

—And not in deadly sleep,
But in awakening bliss ;
And love, that seemed to sweep
So husklike and amiss,
Was richer than the rareripe corn
Whence winnowed it was borne.

EVE

DOWN through a bowery glade
Of Eden
Came Eve in meditation,
With fair-bended brow
And measured footsteps.
Her hands, clasped behind her,
Bound in upon her white body
Like a girdle
Her long-flowing hair.
Sometimes her lips were broken
To murmurous music
Of thought that full-flooding
O'erflowed her lovely silence
In lovelier words, like the mystic
Self-communion
Of lone folk that dwell
Upon life's verges.

“ O Adam ! Adam !
So fully loved, so little loving ;
So wholly served,
Yet so in part devoted,
In small part only ;
With eyes and senses,

The least things of thee,
Me verily loving ;
But with thy soul's eyes,
Thy greater being,
Ever turned fearfully Godward,
Who jealous holdeth
All thy fairer worship ! ”

Now drew she anigh
That Tree
In the midmost Garden,
Spreading and loaded
With untasted fruit,
Fruit wreathed with deathless blossom
“ But if once thou tastedst
This bright fruit forbidden,
Then wert thou as God,
Of God unfearing ;
And to me with thy whole love
As God's devoted.
Death ? But 'twere sweeter
To die so well belovèd ! ”

Then put she forth 'mid the blossom
A fair white arm,
And plucked from his stem
A fragrant apple.

“ But lest thou should'st die
And I be left lonely,
Or lest thou should'st still refuse. . . .”

Therewith she tasted
Of the fair glowing fruit !

SPRING

WHEN Spring breaks graceful through the sod
In bright-bloomed gratitude to God,
A coloured silence that accords
As fresh a thanks as children's words,
Orchestral colours sweeter far
Than all heard loveliest musics are,
Seen tones, heard hues, and more intense
Than deepest passion's reticence,
—My spirit like a running stream
Reflects their grace with glance and gleam,
To broken yolk and flickering flame
Reducing all their flowery fame.

ECCE HOMO !

WHEN reasoning I disallow wing-room for
 cramped imagination,
Confining my soul amain from ethereal native
 courses,
And binding Nature, as to a corpse, to Matter, like
 a tyrant,
Then only seemeth improbable God's incarnate
 revelation.

But, when encroaching not at all on the freedom
 of reason,
I loosen my soul to expand her wings in the eternal,
Nor by binding Nature create a vain supernatural,
Then seemeth it no more wondrous than life that
 Christ was God incarnate.

FRAGMENT

AH! only in the sacred country of forgetting,
Where knowledge is unwrought,
And the child is a child for ever without his fretting,
And life is the hope of age without sad thought,
And the sun is rosy with a rising that hath no
setting,
No noon to fall amain—
There, only is the sacred country of forgetting
Durst we be young again.

NERO

AUTUMN hath set slow fire to the forest : already
the gathering first flames flicker :
Slyly he watches the secret work of his hand, as
the emperor crazed of old
Watched while the first faint threads of flame en-
meshed the streets in a molten wicker,
Then sprang from rafter and roof and mounted
in gathered fountains of raging gold.
—Watched by day, with delirious joy and music,
his city in smoke ascending :
Laughed by night as it rose in tortuous flame and
willowy flakes of fire :

Laughed at the starry crash of the cope and the long
slow groan of the timbers rending,
To cool his heart awhile from the mad insatiable
flames of fierce desire.

THE MAJORITY

HE chode in his heart at Nature for all her pitiless
preying,
The prodigal birth of creatures in vast provision
for pain
And death, the millions born for slow and horrible
slaying,
And the favoured few that flourish and feed
themselves on the slain.

But quiet and clear and sure a voice arose at his
chiding :

“ Since Nature provides for pain and holds at so
little worth
Life, bethink are the strongest blest in their brief
abiding ?
Regards she the few ? Is life the most precious
thing upon earth ?

“What if death be the guerdon true, and life the disaster ?

And pain for the evolution of soul the perfect trend ?

Oh, chide not the pain and the passage of days as the years fly faster :

Only be thou courageous and strong and abide the end.”

RECESSIONAL

FAIR earth, so lovely are thy woods to-day,
Thy meadows and thy many-murmurous streams,

And the fresh flowers wherewith thy hills are gay,

That I ashamed have put away my dreams—

My dreams that seemed so wonderful and fair

Beyond comparison of mortal things,

But fly like last year's leaves upon the air

Below the waving of the new year's wings.

The joy—the glory of it!—and the shame !

The poet's dream is humbled and forgiven,

Forgotten in the glow that never came

Save in God's dream when all the buds are riven,

And Spring's fresh consecration and His grace

Have made the poet's heart a dreamless place.

114 PROLOGUE TO A WINTER'S TALE

LINES IN A CHURCHYARD

HOW shall I weigh with words
Grief, who in other days
Found love too delicate
So to be weighed ?
How can I tell of grief
With love unassayed ?

Love, that abashes thought,
Leaves language bodiless :
Less can thought balance grief.
O words unsayed !
How can I tell of grief
And be not betrayed ?

PROLOGUE TO A WINTER'S TALE

THE purple depths of the heavens were snowily
covered with cloud,
Beautiful woolly bergs from an unfrore Arctic
field
Floating. And over a round grey western vapour
the proud
And bright sun looked like a warrior peering over
his shield.

PROLOGUE TO A WINTER'S TALE 115

The trees were all tender with budding and odorous
passion of bloom,

And a breeze blew over the grasses, fanning to
flame the flowers,

And a faint mist lay in the hollows, filling the preg-
nant gloom

With beautiful birth, and a faint mist softened
the mountain towers.

And the hares ran round in circles over the shining
grass,

And the birds pursued through the bushes between
their breathless songs,

And the lordly stag stood patient and proud for his
doe to pass,

Sure in his strength of possession, alert with his
dreaded prongs.

Then the boy arose from his dreaming, beautiful
and erect.

He had looked on the love of the creatures long
without pleasure or dole ;

But the secret breath of love had blown o'er his heart
unchecked,

And he felt a strange new sense like sadness filling
his soul.

116 PROLOGUE TO A WINTER'S TALE

The stag and doe at his rising had fled from the
drift of the glen,
And the startled birds in the bushes had hushed
their songs for a span,
And the furry folk of the forest crept back to burrow
and den,
Who all unwitting had ventured so close to the
presence of man.

He bound the thongs of his girdle, and gathered
quiver and bow,
And strode knee-deep through the fern-fronds as
one who wades in the sea,
And he toyed with his glossy hair as he went with
bended brow,
Marvelling what this sweet sadness lodged in his
soul might be.

Weighed with the burden of a pleasure that seemed
too close to his heart
And yet so aloof from his grasping, he swiftly
threaded the wood,
Plunging through the thickets wildly, nor felt he the
sudden smarts
When the brambles caught at his knees and
netted his limbs with blood.

PROLOGUE TO A WINTER'S TALE 117

Deeply the day was flooding with a rich mysterious
gold

When he came to the woodman's cottage built in
the clearings of pines,
And where he had played with the woodman's
daughter so often of old.

The tethered goats still grazed there, straining
their knotted lines.

He stopped as he saw his playmate: mysterious
change he knew,

A subtle awe forbidding the old familiar ways,
A delicacy of division that still more closely drew
And fiercely bound them together in a single
sweetness of days.

The tender touch of her fingers enlightened the
sense in his soul,

And changed the mists of sadness to a clear and
rapturous flame.

But swiftly she turned to hide from his glance what
she could not control,

And sorrow, that scorched his spirit like fire, to
her features came.

118 PROLOGUE TO A WINTER'S TALE

And the woodman, who ever had greeted him gladly
in days of old,

Now sadly rose from his axes and laid a hand on
his arm.

The old man's touch went through him piercing as
winter's cold,

And the sound of his voice rang hollow and drear
with a vague alarm.

"While yet there is time, turn back, my Lord, turn
back!" he said,

"If you would keep from trouble folk who have
loved you well."

And out in the gloaming pasture a wether lifted
his head

And tinkled through the twilight a sweet and
merciless bell.

NIGHTFALL

NOW in the cool green waters of the western
skies

Faded are the crimson eddies of the drownèd sun :
Pale where the day rose ruddy doth night arise,

And starrily is begun.

Soon she hath trimmed her silver candles on high,
And rosier lanterns flickering below
Larger through the earth-mist. The western sky
Already is aglow.

ROBINS

S MALL robins cheer the end of the year
When need for cheering is.
What bird doth sing so sweetly through the Spring ?
My heart, aread me this.

Richer maybe those songs of glee
And wilder well I wis ;
But sweeter none than sing small robins dun
When all things are amiss.

ATALANTA AND HIPPOMENES

A PRIL ! April ! The year's first wilful daughter !
With stormy tresses and bright face filled
with laughter !
With Winter dark behind her and Summer before
her
Glowing like a chosen lover to fear her and adore
her !

How fair from her vesture slipped her shoulders are
flashing !

Like foam, above dark swift waters, white from the
crashing

Of torrents wild in ferny and desolate places !

How fair now and failing before her her lover
races !

She is fleet of foot as the doe-like winds of the
valley ;

And he less fleet, and he needs must turn him and
dally.

To look with joy on the glory of her overtaking,
Filling his heart with passion, but his hope for-
saking !

April ! April ! in vain Summer is flying

Before thee, in vain with thine unmatched speed he
is vying,

And looking back for thy beauty, that drives and
betrays him,

Forgets, alas ! to delay thy grace that delays him !

“ I SAW A LITTLE CHILD GO BY ”

I SAW a little child go by
Upon a wintry way.
He danced and sang until his mirth
Rebuked the melancholy earth,
And put a laughter in the sky
Around the sun's dull ray.

How little from your heart, sweet child,
The changing year can take !
To you doth barren winter bring
As much delight as bounteous spring,
For with your love and laughter wild
You keep his heart awake.

My heart went out to dance with him
Upon that wintry way.
Myself I durst not go, lest I
Should fret a thing so sweet and shy,
And check him with a joy grown dim
Through lack of being gay.

WET DAYS

DAPHNE

“ O FLEET one ! O wild one !
How long shall I pursue thee ?
O shy one, why flyest thou
From my embraces ?
Why wouldest thou, O sweet one,
So escape me ?
Who follow not with pride
But tears beseeching !
Can love that is so sweet
Be also bitter ?
How fearest thou my heart
That is so fearful
Of thy soft touches ? Daphne !—Daphne ! ”
So cried Apollo,
The long-pursuing,
And with fleet footsteps
Flashing overtook her.

WET DAYS

RAIN, rain, chilly rain
Overflowing the skies,
Has trickled into my heart,
Trickled, and stagnant lies

At peace in the midst of his peace,
A dark pool luring and dread,
Where love who broods on its brink
Might plunge at a whim and be dead !

STAR-LORE

WHENE'ER I, musing upon the close mystery
of being,

Listen to my thought against my spirit's desire,
Reasoning to an end those evolutionary changes,
And strongly ascribing to the function of material
cells

The beauty of love and the sure pursuit of perfection,

—If I, perchance gazing, observe night the many-lanterned,

My soul, forgetting desire, triumphs over reason.

REVULSION

(FROM "LIFE")

SLOWLY arose the day-spring,
With rosy bubblings and tricklings,
The fountain-source of the broad river
Of bankless light, the great river

REVULSION

Oceanus that girdeth from the beginning,
With alternate gloomy and bright waters,
Immeasurably the Earth.

Alone

At first he seemed in the solemn
Hush, and strangely overpowered
By the beauty of the time, his spirit
Ebbing back upon depths eternal,
And leaving, like a bare sand-stretch,
His body naked and insensate
And forgotten in a blank repose.

Then suddenly from tree and thicket
Broke, unawed, the bright bird-song
In loud salutation, and the joyous
Courage of life, and the lovely
Pride of brief days, and devotion
To the sweet earth, recalling his spirit
To the delight of his bright body again.

CANAAN

THE land, that youth had dreamed of, manhood
sought,

A land of downy weathers and cool streams,
Fragrance and silver sounds and silence fraught
With all that never was,—the land that seems

To youth more real than this fair earth which lies
Before his haunted eyes
Unseen,—perhaps a memory of things sweet,
Far and forgotten, or a destined prize
Already won for his impatient feet.

Fair land! False dream! Ah, was the dream
untrue?

Who knows but that the mind may wander still
Beyond the precincts of its earthly view
Of wooded plains and tented lines of hill,
And bring from sleep vague memory that empowers
Unknown its waking powers
With truer life than well it wots, the one
Perduring world that makes this earth of ours
Less than a mote, less than a spark the sun.

THE FISHERMAN

To G. B.

FAR out the warbler flings his fine
Light-undulating lengths of line,
With lessening coils and artless skill
Shook rippling swiftly out, until
In one straight point true length most fair
It falls cast-perfect on the air.

" HERE WILL I SIT AND BROOD "

" **H**ERE will I sit and brood
Upon the water's face,
And after many days
Of solitude
I will my steps retrace ;
And haply I shall find
My love grown kind.

" Shall I pace to and fro
Before her door again
And latticed window-pane,
Where long ago
I tapped and tapped in vain ?
—Unless the door should be
Ajar for me !

" Oh, that before I come
She from afar might see,
And run to welcome me
Returning home,
And chide that I did flee !
If she with tears and sighs,
O Paradise !

“ HERE WILL I SIT AND BROOD ” 127

“ Thou idle dreamer, Love !
Why mockest thou my woe
With visions that I know
Too false must prove ? ”
Then heard I sweet and low
Her voice, “ I have thee found ! ”
A sad, sad sound.

SUBCONSCIOUSNESS

HOW strange is that vast under-sea
Which underlies the you and me,
Above whose depths our beings are
Single, aloof, dissimilar,
And 'neath whose waves we hold converse
Continual with the Universe.

WILD CREATURES

THEIR laughterless grave faces shy
No sign or shadow give
Of fear or hope or jollity,
Emotions fugitive.
And in their eyes no thoughts transgress
That same quiet wistful tenderness,

That soft half-startled secret thing
Which oft has made the strong forbear,
And drawn the crafty from his snare,
And bids the sweet birds sing.

Has dread so marked them for his own
That so their looks forget
The rare emotions that are thrown
Across their spirits yet ?
—That in their inner selves assume
Brief triumphs, but no more illumine
Or alter features fixed and fain
In resignation like content,
With beauty of abandonment,
And tenderness of pain ?

Or has a greater joy than well
We wot of, filled their day ?
—Such joy that looks could never tell
Nor laughter e'er convey,
Which in their eyes alone is seen,
A wonderment of heart serene,
Though seeming sad from its excess.
Or have their looks that sweetness got
From greater pity of life's lot,
And greater steadfastness ?

Who knows the terror of their lives
And their untold despair,
Let him behold what Springtime gives,
And read fresh wisdom there,
—The leaves and love and swift delight !
The loveliness of heart and sight !
And let him see and mark it well
How still with unchanged faces they
Rejoice. And be they sad or gay,
None from their looks might tell.

TO DISCONTENT

(FROM " LIFE ")

THOU, Discontent divine,
That secretly dost win,
And still art found within
Redoubted joys of mine,
Hid leaven of unrest,
Thou savest me from peace
And fillest up my life
With weariness and strife,
Yet givest me in these
More joy than peace possessed
Even in days most blessed ;
Lest I with little things

Should grow too well content,
And, taking what life brings,
Forget therewith to found
Beyond life's last event
A stairway of ascent
Which death shall not astound.

Thee, Particle of God,
Did He awhile enmesh
Within my toils of flesh
To make me more than sod.
With indignation fine
And fretting fain and strong
Thou strivest to regain
Justly the old domain
Whereto those dost belong,
The unity divine.
Yet dost thou not repine
But that with right goodwill
Thou strivest me to raise,
Laborious, with thee still,
Me, who still hinder thee
With weight of foolish days.
Nor in my fierce delays
Wilt thou abandon me.

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